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AUTHOR Dary, David A.
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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were to determine the extent and type of placement services provided by colleges and universities offering curricula in broadcast journalism, to determine the number of broadcast journalism graduates during the period 1971 to 1974, and to determine how many of these graduates were placed in professional positions upon graduation. The questionnaire was placed on the reverse side of the annual Radio/TV Division membership directory questionnaire and was mailed to the Radio/TV Division members of the Association for Education in Journalism, then numbering 115, with 60 members (56 percent) responding. The 60 respondents represented 41 United States colleges and universities and one in Canada. Thirty-seven of the 41 colleges and universities (90 percent) reported that they do help place broadcast journalism graduates upon completion of the students' degree programs, using one or more of four methods of placement. (Author/RB)

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DIVISION SURVEY OF PLACEMENT OF BROADCAST JOURNALISM GRADUATES

By David A. Dary

University of Kansas

Presented at the Convention of the Association for Education in Journalism, Radio-Television Division, at San Diego, California, August, 1974.

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The purposes of this study were (1) to determine the extent and type of placement services provided by colleges and universities offering curricula in broadcast journalism, (2) to determine the number of broadcast journalism graduates during the period 1971 to 1974, and (3) to determine how many of them were placed in professional positions upon graduation.

METHOD

The study is based on the results of a questionnaire mailed to Division members in early April 1974. The questionnaire was placed on the back side of the annual Radio/TV Division membership directory questionnaire and was mailed to the Division membership, then numbering 115 persons. Sixty members (56%) responded to the questionnaire. The 60 respondents represented 41 United States colleges and universities and one in Canada.

RESULTS

Methods of Placement

Thirty-seven of the 41 colleges and universities (90%) reported that they do help place broadcast journalism graduates upon completion of the students' degree programs. The 37 institutions use one or more of four methods of placement.

A breakdown of the methods used and the number of colleges and universities utilizing one or more of these methods is:

Method of Placement	Number of Colleges and Universities Using
Personal teacher/news director contact	28
Utilization of central college or university placement office	13
Formalized full-time placement employee in the department or school to coordinate all jobs and students' applications	8
Publication of a booklet containing the names and backgrounds of all graduating seniors. (Copies of the booklet are sent to prospective employers.)	8

Reasons for No Placement Efforts

Of the four colleges and universities reporting no active placement efforts, three of the four gave the following reasons:

> "Industry moving too fast to keep records up. The problem is that jobs open up when kids aren't available to take them."
>
> "Two reasons: (1) The Mass Communications Department organized two years ago, has not yet addressed itself to this opportunity for service; (2) of all institutions in the state system of higher education, ours has the heaviest PRINT-journalism ascendancy. . . ."
>
> "There is a placement service at the University but I don't know of one graduate being placed in broadcasting through the service. Usually, students find the jobs on their own. . . ."

Placement of Graduates

Of the 37 colleges and universities reporting active efforts to place broadcast journalism graduates, less than half provided graduate and placement figures for students between 1971 and 1974.

The results were:

Year	Number of Graduates	Graduates Placed	Number of Institutions
1971	213	121 (56%)	18
1972	245	163 (66%)	19
1973	298	153 (51%)	20
1974	332*	164* (49%)	20
TOTAL	1088	601 (55%)	*estimated

Regional Breakdown

Based on the data received in the survey is the following regional breakdown:

Northeast (New England, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, District of Columbia, Rhode Island, Ohio, West Virginia, and Indiana.)

Year	Number of Graduates	Graduates Placed	Number of Institutions
1971	73	56 (76%)	5
1972	85	59 (69%)	5
1973	90	57 (63%)	6
1974	95*	49* (51%)	6
TOTAL	343	221 (64%)	*estimated

South (Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Kentucky.)

Year	Number of Graduates	Graduates Placed	Number of Institutions
1971	23	20 (86%)	2
1972	32	29 (90%)	2
1973	33	22 (66%)	2
1974	36*	23* (63%)	2
TOTAL	124	94 (75%)	*estimated

Central (Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois.)

Year	Number of Graduates	Graduates Placed	Number of Institutions
1971	94	42 (44%)	9
1972	102	66 (64%)	9
1973	144	62 (43%)	9
1974	167*	82* (49%)	9
TOTAL	507	252 (49%)	*estimated

West plus one Canadian (Alberta) respondent (New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, California, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon.)

Year	Number of Graduates	Graduates Placed	Number of Institutions
1971	23	3 (13%)	4
1972	26	9 (34%)	4
1973	31	15 (48%)	4
1974	34*	10* (26%)	4
TOTAL	114	37 (32%)	

Placement Problems

Respondents were asked to describe the problems experienced in placing broadcast journalism graduates. There was a wide range of answers.

Six respondents indicated difficulty in maintaining liaison with the industry and working to time openings in stations with graduation dates.

Six respondents felt that too many broadcast stations are only interested in hiring someone who will work cheap instead of someone college-trained. One respondent noted: "A majority of our students are employed outside the state . . . primarily due to the ridiculously low starting salaries offered by broadcasters . . ."

Six respondents said the biggest problem they faced was that the job market for graduates was tight.

Five respondents reported problems in getting broadcasters to accept internships for students whereby the students can prove themselves to potential employers.

Two respondents complained about the lack of planning on the part of radio and television news directors who "hire on a very hit-or-miss basis" and "only when vacancies appear."

Two respondents reported a problem in convincing graduates to take out-of-town or out-of-state positions.

Other problems reported include: "Lack of adequate funds to administer a placement program, lack of professionalization of radio newsrooms, thereby restricting the number of job openings for the more expensive college-trained broadcast journalists, no clearinghouse for jobs with small radio stations, getting students to follow up on job leads, finding enough students to fill jobs," and one respondent pointed out that "broadcasters are not interested in interviewing broadcast journalism students on his campus because journalism faculty efforts are too greatly oriented toward placing print journalism graduates in positions."

It appears that most colleges and universities with programs in broadcast journalism do make some effort to place graduates in professional broadcast journalism positions. The most common method of placement is personal contact between the broadcast journalism professor(s) and news directors in or near the communities where the colleges or universities are located.

Between 1971 and 1974 there was an increase in the number of graduates in broadcast journalism. But at the same time there was a slight decrease in the number of graduates placed in proportion to the number of broadcast journalism graduates. No single reason for the decrease is evident from the data gathered, although it would appear that perhaps a tight job market and a lack of communication between the teachers of broadcast journalism in many colleges and universities and news directors in the industry contributed to the decrease.

In conclusion, it would appear that more attention needs to be given to the placement of broadcast journalism graduates by teachers of broadcast journalism at the college and university level. While there are teachers of broadcast journalism actively involved in placing their graduates, there are indications that many teachers need to become more actively involved in such placement. Perhaps the Radio/TV Division of AEJ should become actively involved in doing further research regarding such placement and assist members in helping to set up placement programs.